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Market Potentials Analysis

For the Arlandria / Upper Potomac West Retail District

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for the City of Alexandria, Department of Planning

On behalf of Design Collective, Inc.

August 17, 2002 / Revised September 3, 2002

INTRODUCTION

This market potentials analysis responds to a request by Alexandria's Neighborhood Planning & Community Development Division to assist in determining a marketing identity and interim revitalization strategy for the Upper Potomac West (Arlandria) commercial district.

The community had already worked extensively with the City to produce an Upper Potomac West Task Force Report on redevelopment of the Safeway-Datatel site. That work resulted not only in detailed plans and concept designs for a large, mixed-use project at the site, but also identified principles regarding physical development and community character to help guide revitalization of the entire Upper Potomac West commercial district. The group identified neighborhood issues beyond the Safeway-Datatel site that they recommended the City address in order to continue their work and to proactively enhance desirable redevelopment in the area.

A subsequent Work Group was formed, comprised of some former Task Force participants, residents, and business owners, who worked to identify existing quality of life issues in Arlandria (e.g. overflowing trash containers, zoning and code violations, etc.). The group also developed a long-range vision for the future development of the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor, with planning principles that include the creation of a retail-oriented streetscape. Related to these issues, group members recognized the need to create a more unified commercial district, to retain existing businesses and to attract new businesses, which underlies the purpose of this study.

It has been determined that the redevelopment project, though supportable in the market at some point in the near future, was unlikely to happen until the neighborhood's investment environment changed for the better.

The market analysis therefore seeks to assess the near-term market demand for different types of retail stores and to propose an appropriate "interim" strategy that helps define a marketing identity and strengthen the retail environment. This market analysis is also meant to provide input to a more comprehensive urban design plan that had been underway prior to the start of this study. Finally, the strategy provides recommendations and an action plan for management, redevelopment and other components of the revitalization effort.